

CHAPTER-III

REVISITING THE PAST IN *THE SEA*

John Banville's novels are highly stylistic and use poetic language which exalts his characterization and depiction of the protagonists at the time of crisis in life. Banville's use of poetic language, descriptive manner in the expression of anguish of the protagonists, furnishes relevant solution to the problems by using his manner of writing and expression. He says "I am committed to language and to rhythm above plot, characterization, or pacing." His craftsmanship tends to elaborate keenly human behavior and environment. His narratives indistinctively provide with the ground on which it has to consolidate a distinctive self through style and illuminating those traits, that give his writing its distinctiveness. In Irish Literature, John Banville has invented a new scope in his narration based on the expression of the real-life incidents through the exploration of the past by recalling and by visiting. He perceives human mind and overwhelming desire that seeks a perfect place for comfort. He bestows the conceit of human mind which renders at the time of difficulty in life. He depicts psychic of his protagonists who are suffering a lot from mental stress. His narration involves the complications of the protagonists and their attempts to handle the unfavorable conditions. The protagonists are characterized and categorized on the basis of their goals and tasks which they perform to release themselves from the stress. He expresses mental conditions of his protagonists through his mastery over words.

Characterization of the shifting to the past is one of the key elements of John Banville's novel. He portrays the retreats of his protagonists to their origin place in search of consolation. Banville has written many novels in which he portrays his characters who suffer psychologically and seek appropriate place for themselves. His novels delineate strives of men who oscillate to retrieve the moments which ever rendered them to live happily in the beginning of life. The broken hearts of the protagonists tend them to escape from them current place of distress to origin place where they were living happily with their parents. He depicts his characters who return to their birthplace to sense the same experience as it was some fifty years before. Memory ameliorates them to recollect the incidents of their life by observing, smelling and touching the things around them. He tries to recapture the past moments through

his power of expression in the form of memory that are related to the places, and by visiting those places which have the capabilities as reminders. His novels such as *The Newton Letter* (1982), *The Untouchable* (1997), *Eclipse* (2000), and *The Sea* (2005) expounds his protagonists who venture to explore their birthplace. His quest for home and belonging delineates his obsession for returning home and adhering identity and authenticity. Most of his works frequently include the journey of the distinguished characters to the same place having different purposes. Retreating to the place of origin, is to enter a strange world which consists, to some extent, a bunch of good and bad memories including some severely affecting incidents. As in *Ancient Light* (2012), the protagonist comprehends two losses in his life: one is of his daughter, and the other is of his girlfriend. He gets reminded them fifty years after by returning to Irish coastal town. He efficiently portrays pains of life of his protagonists who are suffering because of loss any dear or intimate. They try to shift away from the place where they are living. As in *The Sea*, the protagonist, Max Morden, suffers a lot after the death of his wife. He finds himself in miserable situation after the death of his wife which torments him from inside. He decides to leave the city life for mental stability.

Banville's quest for the identical place, apart from the contemporary which is scathing, instigates him to look through the memories of the past days. Although he does not want his protagonists to live solely in the past, he insists to make analogy with the two arenas of life. He allows his protagonists to have experience of two different worlds. He then distinguishes good one among them. He states: "The past is all we have. The present is an abstraction, the future is mere potential. What has happened. It's in the past that we live." He reinforces the idea of moving back which is, according to him, a better place for anyone. He also accentuates the places of childhood days over the places of city life. He acclaims the experience of childhood retaining good or bad memories and having capacity to release stresses. He corroborates his idea in his novels with the movement of the protagonists from place to place, who ultimately find the origin place more pleasing. According to Banville, incidents of childhood are more important. They create trauma on human mind and prolong to the rest of life. As in an interview, Banville states: "children should be loaded with as much trauma as they can bear, because it good for them." He discusses trauma as part of human life relating to human mind which assists to keep in touch with the incidents of life and remains longer

as the form of memory.

Banville's works predict his favor in writing about the past. He also emphasizes nostalgia as a key element which amends to adhere the past. Since, nostalgia is made up of desire to return home. His protagonists seem obsessed and having always been in the mode of returning home for consolation. Most of his protagonists have inherent feelings regarding boyhood, and depository of incidents which aggregate abstractly to form levels of nostalgia. He constitutes, in most of his books, an intense and overwhelming emotion called nostalgia, which is yearning for the past. Nostalgia seems appealing to as a means of spiritual salvation. Apparently, his protagonists retrospect the old places that appear escaping for redemption. Banville creates a world which involves such characters who are alienated, extremely sensitive and suffering from mental and spiritual confusion and distortion. In most of the cases, his heroes are either overburdened under the pressure of life that is too much for them, or the struggle of some crisis caused by severely mishaps. Though the present life does not have anything favorable, it is extremely enough for them. Therefore, it is quite natural for them to anticipate something better from the past. These protagonists usually return to their favorite places in retrospection, and eventually the subsisting physical objects evoke nostalgia such as the smell of the house, remaining of the destroyed buildings, natural surroundings, and the wide sea. Unlike the protagonists of other novelists, Banville's protagonists are caught in remembering the happenings of early days. They prefer to recall any of the moments by staring eagerly to the objects which may have inherent memory and tend to give momentary happiness. They get delighted to live in the past more often than that of present, as the unbearable failure they must be facing in the real world. As in *Eclipse*, Banville's protagonist, Alexander Cleave, a middle-aged man, leaves an impression of nostalgia of his childhood. He undergoes a lot of mental agonies in his real life and chooses not to live anymore where he is. He then approaches to childhood home. Cleave moves to his childhood house, keeping distance from the harsh and brutal reality. He always prefers to live in his memory and ravishing the past. While dwelling in his old house, he gets struck in two chaotic and painful worlds: the old and the new, the past and the present.

Unlike other writers' protagonists, John Banville's protagonists choose coastal villages or towns, consisting natural surroundings especially the sea area, which have

the potential to console them. These natural surroundings arouse feelings and emotions related to childhood days. Banville's depiction of the sea, since it is considered as prominent natural entity and the source of life, relieves from all pains. In Irish literature, there are various novelists, who have recognized the importance of the sea. The novels such as Dermot Bolger's *Temptation* (2000), John Banville's *The Sea* (2005), and Ian McEwan's *On Chesil Beach* (2007) are based on the protagonists' lives revolving around the sea. Since the country is surrounded with the big sea. Its longer coastal line is the source of various novelists' inspiration of novel writings. Different novels have different expectations from the sea. Some of the novels tend to the sea for the enjoyment of the protagonists, some of them depict the wedding celebrations, and some of them appeal to soothe their protagonists who return to mourn over the death of loved ones or over another big loss. Therefore, the function of the sea is as a setting of childhood memories and for an escape from the other civilization. It seems that the sea operates as a maker of the characters in the novels. The protagonists of the novels rush to the beach where they ever rented lodge to accommodate themselves with their parents during the holidays. They frequently visit the beach every day and observe its beauty with their vigilant eyes. In *The Book of Evidence* (1989), the protagonist, Freddie Montgomery, while visiting to his hometown, approaches to the sea to relieve himself from the stresses of city life. In *Ancient Light*, the protagonist is tormented by the death of his daughter and girlfriend, eventually rushes to the sea beach to mitigate his anguish. John Banville's *The Sea* is a prominent text which vividly portrays the beauty of the sea. The sea is considered as a progenitor of the protagonist's life. Max Morden begins his life living around the sea. Throughout the novel, the sea is a major natural entity which becomes basis of his life. Max states: "Down here, by the sea, there is a special quality to the silence at night. I do not know if this is my doing, I mean if this quality is something I bring to the silence of my room, and even of the whole house, or if it is a local effect, due to the salt in the air, perhaps, or the seaside climate in general." (71) Banville delineates the beauty and calmness of the sea as something which may have capacity to soothe the whole humanity.

John Banville's *The Sea* is a major text concerning the life journey of its bildungsroman protagonist who wants to move away from his surroundings in search of tranquility. It depicts Irish mentality and sufferings as well as promotes awareness of

complexity of real life which contains pains and distress. The writer belongs to Ireland where people face mental sufferings due to the loss and boredom. He shares similar embroilment referring the memory of childhood place as extinguisher for all these torments. The novel revolves around an art historian, Max Morden, who suffers from mental agonies and executes numerous plans to get away from these. The novel bears the obsession of its protagonist who adherently decides to return his home, especially to the rented lodge named, the Cedar. The house carries nostalgia and experience of his early life which seems as an important event ever. He prefers to visit those places which have nostalgia of his childhood days. He wants to smell, touch and observe again the vanishing images which ever had drastic impact in his life. Initially, Banville puts his protagonist in the perplexity of life then finds ways to get him out of this. The bewilderments of life echo throughout the novel in terms of death of the dearest and the desertion of family member. The sea in the novel *The Sea* plays a vital role in life of the protagonist. It functions as a reminder and assists him to remember vividly all the events of his life. He observes the movement of the sea: rising and falling waves raise multiple notes in his heart. He vividly states: "All morning under a milky sky the waters in the bay had swelled and swelled, rising to unheard-of heights, the small waves creeping over parched sand that for years had known no wetting save for rain and lapping the bases of the dunes." (01) He grows up in the salty air of the sea from childhood to adulthood until he moves to the city. He wants to return again the coastal village where he used to come with his parents during holidays. He travels back to a place called, Ballyless, a seaside village where he spent summers as a youth. He gets reminded everything related to his early life when he observes old building contemporary to his boyhood and the house where he used to live. The sounds produced by the swelling of the sea, he hears, rejuvenate the incidents of life. He suspends himself while watching towards the sea and sitting on the dunes of the coast. He always refers the past moment as he hears the noises coming out of the sea. The past seems an integral body organ which strikes intermittently. He considers the past as his heartbeat. He himself states: "The past beats inside me like a second heart." (13)

The novel opens with the protagonist looking at the sea from a house near the coast. He observes the swelling of the weaves and turning pebbles at the sea which reminds him the scuffles of life. He has come back to this place in search of relief from

the distress that he acknowledges after the death of his wife. He commemorates his childhood days at this place when he was living here with his parents and with the Grace family that was dear to him after his parents. He spends most of his times with the Grace family especially with Chloe who was his first girlfriend ever. Max prefers to live here having two different lives: first his boyhood life which he gets reminded after sensing his surroundings, and the second his present life which he has consisting of a lot of unforgettable moments of recent time. He sees the view of the sea from the window of the house, the Cedars, which now belongs to Miss Vavasour. Initially, he portrays the geographical position of the house observing some minor change in it, and delineates the surroundings which being possessed nature's beauty to some extent. He extols the beauty of the locality and even finds no major change in its milieu. He says: "I am amazed at how little has changed in the more than fifty years that have gone by since I was last here." (04) He retreats to the house with a lot of expectations which he hopes to get. The past memories of his life that the house kept alive, he trusts, would supply him several unnoticed events which he could not get during city life. He himself states: "I who have come back to live amidst the rubble of the past?" (04) The house ravishes him a lot and retains the foremost moments of his life that were getting missed. The house is considered as a summer house where many families come to spend summer days. Max too, with his family, comes over here. He comes across several new families each year. He says:

When I was here all those years ago, in the time of the gods, the Cedars was a summer house, for rent by the fortnight or the month. During all the June each year a rich doctor and his large, raucous family infested it- we did not like the doctor's loud-voiced children, they laughed at us and threw stones from behind the unbreachable barrier of the gate- and after them a mysterious middle-aged couple came, who spoke to no one, and grimly walked their sausage dog in silence at the same time every morning down Station Road to the strand. August was the interesting month at the Cedars, for us. The tenants then were different each year, people from England or the Continent, the odd Pair of honeymooners whom we would try to spy on, and once even a fit-up troupe of itinerant theatre people who were putting on an afternoon show in the village's galvanised-in cinema. And then, that year, came the family, Grace. (5-6)

Max remembers how he comes across many families in his boyhood at the Cedar. Each family has different characteristic who are visiting the house. He visits the Cedar in the summer time when other families also visit the house. He portrays the families including a doctor's family having naughty children who throw stones on his house, a mysterious middle-aged couple having dog, honeymooners, and the Grace family. The Grace family too stays at the Cedar in summer. According to him, the Graces are the most important family who gives him a bunch of memory of adulthood at the Cedar. Moreover, they offer him to spend most of time with them. He shares various moments which he experiences living around them. After getting devastated by the desertion of his father in childhood, he could not tolerate the critical condition of his mother. He cannot manage to maintain tranquility in his house. His mother, in fit of madness, cries out on him most of the time. He leans to the Grace family. He spends time with them enjoying picnic at the seaside. He attracts first towards the beauty of Mrs. Grace and seduces her secretly when he gets chance. Max possesses a long last relation with the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Grace, Chloe. She is an adorable daughter with her twin brother, Myles. Both always live together when he notices them.

Max's life is greatly influenced by the people around him at the early stage of life. They mostly affect him because he engages himself with them to find, in part, enjoyment of life. He holds emotions in terms of memory pertaining to loved ones around him who ever shared unforgettable moments with him. Initially, Max's visit to this house rekindles inner self for beholding upon the things around him. He falls in nostalgia which strikes in his mind intermittently. The events of the past start recollecting his mind. His mind is getting filled with multiples memories of childhood and adulthood days. His numeration of nostalgias at the Cedar is more exciting than that of the city which left nothing but distress and shock all the time. He finds himself captivated with the memory at the coastal village. The beauty of the surroundings along the sea is enthusiastic for him. The beauty around the Cedar, as always, is fascinating and inculcating mental stability. Notwithstanding he has a life full of luxurious things, he decides to discard this temporary merrymaking luxurious city's life. The city could not assist him to get away from the all kinds of agony especially the death of his wife. He finds himself indulged with the past which left behind. He believes that the memory of past along with naturally rich coastal village will help improve his critical

mental imbalance. He states: “So much of life was stillness then, when we were young.” (12) He feels energized while being surrounded with nature. He states: “Behind him I could see all the way down the narrow garden at the back of the house to the diagonal row of trees skirting the railway line.” (11). He also observes the arrival of the Graces in the rented house. As it is a summer house, the Graces have come to spend summer. He notices them since they have arrived because the family has two beautiful ladies. He has strong feeling for woman as he cannot get affection from any woman, even from his mother. Whenever he gets chance, he peeps inside the house to see them. He hears the voice of girls and sound of running barefoot upstairs. He spots Mr. Grace coming hurriedly out of the house to get something from his car holding a wine glass in his hand. He also beholds one the twins, Myles, hanging on the gate when his parents heading towards the town in their car. He recalls other tenants and neighborhood like Colonel Blunden who lives next to his room. Colonel is a politician as well as a weird man who puts his eyes on Max’s activities. Duignan, the dairyman, gives milk to Max. He is a local guy. He tells him mysterious stories of the village. Miss Vavasour, now owner of the house, was mistress at the Graces when Max was intimate to the family. When she was young, she took care of the twins. The life of Max also gets affected by Miss Vavasour. She watches him when he seduces Mrs. Grace and Chloe. Max remembers how he spends time when he is free. The seaside is the most loving place where he sits hours beholding towards swelling tides of the sea. He says “I walked down Station Road in the sunlit emptiness of afternoon. The beach at the foot of the hill was a fawn shimmer under indigo. At the seaside all is narrow horizontals, the world reduced to a few ling straight lines pressed between earth and sky.” (10)

Subsequently, he remembers his wife’s critical situation when she was on the brink of life and death; he took her hospital. Max mentions weird name, De’ Arth, the consultant, famously known as Mr. Todd, was treating his wife. He recalls the hospital where both had visited to consult with the doctor until his wife passes away. His wife was suffering from a severe incurable disease. He says that he inspects the doctor’s office that seemed a room-cum-hospital. Outside the office, he observes, the city that looks beautiful including the oak trees and beech. The surroundings of the hospital evoke nostalgia of his school time after the summer holidays, the feel of brand-new schoolbooks and the somehow bode full smell of ink and pared pencil. He finds his

wife sitting in front of the doctor resting her hands in her lap for advice. The pale face of his wife yields him to look up the doctor, however, he knows the reality of her sickness. The doctor's hesitancy, tending him to figure out the reality that is happening with his wife, he never expected. He shares fear that he observes in his wife's eyes while doing conversation with her consultant. The doctor assuages her to lessen down worry about her disease, but she cannot control her emotion. He asks "is it the death sentence, or do I get life?" (16) Max fears too what will happen with her? Max then takes her to home. After returning from the doctor, he remembers his house where he finds things scattered all around; the utensils are displaced in the kitchen. He finds her little upset and weeping on her miserable condition. Both converse on their life which is truly simple that as they are living together. He then offers her wine to drink which she accepts but drinks nothing. He perceives her desperate mode when he abruptly moves away and sits heavily near the window. His worries about his wife's health compel him to think life without his wife would be mere a ruined land.

Max suddenly shifts from the memory of his wife to the Graces when Miss Vavasour, in present, arranges his bed and he finds Colonel creeping back to his room. He thinks over the Graces who were living upstairs. He says that he never dares to go upstairs where the Graces were living, except in dream. His eyes first follow Mrs. Grace, Constance, hanging out near the garden with other members of the family. He suddenly gets reminded, once when he hangs out, the family too approaches the beach. The twin is playing on the sand dunes, Mrs. Grace is bathing in the sea, and Mr. Grace is reading newspaper sitting on a folding chair. From the distance, Max observes the activities of all the members. He pretends as not looking at them by engaging himself in the book. He conceives that the family has come to enjoy picnic because they have brought my things including a small suitcase containing bottles and vacuum flasks, tins of sandwiches and biscuits, and the real tea cups with saucers. He looks them instantly. The eyes of Max fix first to the beauty of Mrs. Grace who is just coming out of the sea by wrapping herself in towel. He is captivated by the bodily charm of the lady Grace. He looks furtively through the books. He then spots Chloe who later becomes his girlfriend. He says: "I first saw her, Chloe Grace, on the beach. It was bright, wind-worried day and the Graces were settled in a shallow recess scooped into the dunes by wind and tides to which their somewhat raffish presence lent a suggestion of the

proscenium.” (26) Chloe, he finds her, kneeling on the sand wrapped herself in a big red towel. He notices her closely when she is trying to unwrap herself from the wet bathing suit. She seems markedly pale and soulful of expression with a long slender face and heavy black hair. Chloe too watches Max and others standing on the dunes. He then notices the boy, Myles, bothering her sister playfully. Myles holding a stick in his hand is driving it uselessly into the sand and pinching his sister with it. They strive to snatch the stick from each other. Finally, Myles wins in snatching the stick. Another girl, he notices, is a mistress named Rose who manages all the things they have for the picnic and cries on the twin when they behave badly. The family enjoys the picnic on the beach. Mr. and Mrs. Grace smoke cigarette together as well as take wine. Members of the family except Mr. Grace are playing games by throwing the ball on the head of one another. Max enjoys them playing and the beauty of both ladies: Mrs. Grace and Chloe.

Abruptly, memory of his parents, when he used to come here with them, strikes in his mind. Max shifts from the memory of the Graces to his parents. He says “We holidayed here every summer, my father and mother and I. We would not have put it that way.” (34) He recalls his first visit with his parent to this village, Ballymore, in his childhood some fifty years ago. The rented house was a small old-fashioned mansion consisting three small rooms and a living room along with a kitchen. He notices the ceiling of the house was sloped undersides of the tarpapered roof. He gets delighted when his mother asks him to go around for bringing something. He shares the very violent nature of his father who always seems in fury. Max’s father often goes to the village to earn money and returns bearing frustration of the day. The relationship between his father and mother was not nourishing well because of his father’s furious nature towards his mother and him. For Max, those days appears the days of childhood of his parents. Now, he considers himself older than his parents and others who were with his on this place. He states: “How strange a thing that is to think of. Everybody seems to be younger than I am, even the dead.” (35) He is over fifty when he gets a chance to visit this place again. Memory of childhood seems closer to him as happened just shortly before. He sees his parents playing resentfully at house in the childhood of the world. Their unhappiness is marked by his earliest years that passed restlessly. Max then remembers his visit to the sea along with parents for bathing as with the Graces.

He along with father and mother bathes in the sea. His mother is not too much interested in bathing like other women. His father is fair swimmer who draws violently first to his mother then him. He never likes his father's attitude because he is being rude all the time. But, Max says, he loves his parents a lot. The memory of his family and the Graces strikes in his mind intermittently. Being at the beach, he enjoys them bathing and also recalls his bathing with his parents. Playing of the twins on the sand dunes evokes his childhood memory playing like them.

The shifting of memory can simply be traced in Banville's novels. His protagonists cannot adhere to a single memory. They leap up to other memories related to the same person or place. The smell of the things or the place evokes other memories adjacent to the first one. He switches on various memories simultaneously. The protagonist, Max, frequently transposes in other period to reveal the hidden incidences in form of memories to figure out his authenticity. He has a bunch of memories that come out of the real facts of early days of life including the happenings of sooner and later days. Max is fervently attached to his own daughter, Claire. She is disappointed with her father's decision who wants to dwell on the past in terms of memory. She asks him you live in the past. He replies "Life, authentic life, is supposed to be all struggle, unflagging action and affirmation, the will butting its blunt head against the world's wall, suchlike, but when I look back, I see that the greater part of my energies was always given over to the simple search for shelter, for comfort, for, yes, I admit, it, for cosiness." (60) He rebukes her for disturbing him when he prefers to move to those places of his early and later childhood life. He portrays his daughter who is, a twenty-two-year-old bright woman, akin to her mother. His daughter has accompanied him Ballyless for the first time after his wife's death. He then reminisces about his long-drive journey with his daughter when she was a kid. He takes her various places where he ever lived in childhood or in adulthood. He and his daughter are fond of expedition. Most of his journey is to explore the places and related memories to these places over a period of time. He recalls his one of journeys when he goes on a motoring holiday with his daughter when she was an adolescent. She gets bored with vineyards and chateaux. He returns without appeasing his appetite of seeing his old place. He makes a trip again with his daughter. He reaches to a village and he states "When we arrived I marveled to see how much of the village as I remember it was still here, if only for eyes that knew

where to look, mine, that is. It was encountering an old flame behind whose features thickened by age the slender lineaments that a former self so loved can still be clearly discerned.” (46-47) His sojourn to the place surprises him after observing drastic change in the places. Notwithstanding, it undergoes the old experiences which he ever felt. He observes the gravity of the place which draws his attention regarding numerous undivided attachments to this place. He wants no longer abstained from the reality of his life. He knows the importance of the past therefore he cries out on his daughter in his mind “let me alone..., let me creep past the traduced old Cedars, past the vanished Strand Café, past the Lupins and the Field that was, past all this past, for if I stop I shall surely dissolve in a shaming puddle of tears.” (50-51)

He prefers to roam in the past so as he can experience it again. He is strongly indulged to live in the past recalling the memories regarding the places. He gives an example of his keenness to explore the past. Once he goes to an expedition with his daughter to find someone who was intimate to him in his childhood. He goes to a farmhouse where a dairyman, Duignan, used to live with his parents. Max has a plenty memory related to Duignan. In his childhood, Max used to go to buy milk from him. He says “Here as a boy I would walk down every morning, barefoot and bearing a dented billycan, on my way to buy the day’s milk from Duignan the dairyman or his stoically cheerful, big-hipped wife.” (50) The condition of the dairy farm was unacceptable and things were scattered all around including chicken-shits, dog lying, and a dirty white horse cart. He portrays the other members of the house who look scary except Duignan. Duignan has smiley face with a thin hair and invisible eyelashes. He usually asks Max about his first girlfriend. Max hesitates to replay since he was a kid. He never dared to inter the house. Duignan’s mother used to stare him from the window of the house. Duignan’s life is significant because he used to tell Max many magical or fairytales of the village. He never forgets the window panes dirtied over or broken or grass growing on the roof. Max’s inherent desire to peep again into the past kindles him to enquire the farmhouse after fifty years. He says “Now here I was at the farm gate again, the child of those days grown corpulent and half-grey and almost old.” (53) Max approaches to the farmhouse when grows old. Being an old man, he tries to recollect those moment again that left blurred. Here at the farmhouse, he finds a elderly young woman, Avril. He tries to interact with her who is standing inside the window

glass. She is not akin to Duignan. She does not recognize the name, Duignan. Max narrates her about his intimacy to Duignan and also asks what happened to the farm as well as the mother and daughter. The lady informs him about the daughter who died young, was Christy Duignan. She adds that her mother is still alive. She is admitted in a nursing home somewhere along the coast.

Max loiters in his memory remembering the important peoples. He once again returns to the memory of the Graces family. Despite the day has passed before, he remains struck to the significant moments with them. In another memory, he penetrates in his mind to view another clear the picture of the past. Max remembers one important moment when he gets a chance to enter the room of the Graces. He first walks around the house for a glimpse of Mrs. Grace, but could not find. He then determines to enter the house to get introduced with them. He passionately searches for Mrs. Grace being attracted towards her physical charm. When the door remains opened, he dares to enter the house to look, to smell and to touch the same thing as Mrs. Grace occasionally do. Moreover, he can observe the twins, a weird creation, who live together all the time. They look same by face and have common interests. He imagines that they could be tied and bound to each other. They might feel things in common, pains, emotions, and fears. They might even think and dream the same thing. He finds Myles as a mute boy since birth. Max never met such guy who did not utter single word. The twins are spotted at Strand Café and he follows them before he is followed. He says he never encountered any twins in the flesh in his life. They are brother and sister and so cannot be identical having one mind two bodies. Max finds himself under the surveillance of Rose who keeps her eyes on him most of the time. Myles is always found in doing something unusual and Chloe in dismay. Entering the house, Max inspects the room since he never dared to cross the threshold and talks to Mrs. Grace and the other family members who are around him. Chloe sits beside him and converses him about many things of life. Max concentrates on Mrs. Grace who looks beautiful and arranging the flowers on the table. She sits near him and offers him juice and fruits to eat. Max is surrounded with other family members who are engaged in their works.

Banville argues that whatever dreams and images we have about our future in childhood, they generally discrete in adulthood. Max also dreams about his future in his childhood which is subtly different in present as he saw. He states: “when I consider

the matter closely, I see that the version of the future that I pictured as a boy had an oddly antique cast to it. The world in which I live now would have been, in my imagining of it then, for all my perspicacity, different from what it is in fact.” (p. 95)

Like other boys, Max foresees his future to be flourished. However, the pictures of the future foreseen in childhood are not corresponding exactly when he grows up. The pictures of the childhood about future now have become as fantasies. Those days of the past, especially the childhood when dreams usually struck in the mind, are now solely the truth of life. The already gone past days concerning to his childhood is now furnishing a bunch of nostalgia of those days. The glimpse of future seen in childhood appears distinct as a dreadful present when his wife deserts him on the way of life. He wonders that people have dreams in their childhood to be what they would become when they grow-up. Most of the children live their childhood picturing an ideal world for their own. Max too draws solid pictures of his future in childhood. Max in his childhood was very precise and definite in his expectations. He says that he never wanted to become an engine driver or a famous explorer. Now, after serving as an architect, he is retired from the exhaustive race of life being detached from the social responsibilities. Curious to know everything in the outset life has been resolved and the difficult questions of early stage answered when he comes at the age of adulthood. The puzzles and mysteries of life that ever troubled him a lot in childhood because of the least awareness got gradually settled. He further says that old age is extremely calm and uncurious in terms of having a lot of experiences of life. Problems that a person ever faced in childhood and adulthood get ultimately terminated. Despite being accomplished with all sorts of requirement that he wanted in childhood and in young age, Max observes insufficiency and dullness in staying at a place. Past is a stimulating entity that ameliorates to survive the rest of life, however, he has nothing in hand except the memory of his wife and childhood. Max remembers a dreadful time period when his wife was closer to her death. He says he cannot forget that moment which has shaken him from inside. His wife, Anna, being in great trouble, could not be quietened. He says “We went back over our earliest days together reminding, correcting, helping each other, like two ancients tottering arms-in arm along the ramparts of a town where they had once lived, long ago.” (99) Since, Max obviously knows the importance of the past. He usually calms down his agitation by retreating back to the places again and remembering the incidents of life.

Max gradually deepens in his thoughts and memories concerned to his life. The incidents of life are deliberately recollecting in his mind to fuse with the past and present. He also presses on his mind to bring forth the nostalgia of the happenings which have caused a lesser impact. He remembers his wedding day to Anna. He says "We recalled especially the smoky London Summer in which we met and married." (100) The remembrance of his marriage ceremony at London kindles the memory of his wife who is dead now. According to him, she looks so pretty amongst the guests when he gets a chance to see her first time. He says "I spotted Anna first at party in someone's flat one chokingly hot afternoon... It was the size of her that first caught my attention." (100). The physical charm of her captivates his attention. He proposes her so as he has decided to continue life with her. Anna's father gives his consent after enquiring about Max and his family background. For Max, marrying to Anna was fulfilling the dream which he ever had after seeing Mrs. Grace. Subsequently, he switches to the beauty of Mrs. Grace who is equally attractive to his wife. He meets Mrs. Grace first when he was in adulthood. Her bulky thighs draw his attention and lure him to render intention. Like his wife, Mrs. Grace is calm, decent and unique amongst the women around him. The intimacy with the Grace ameliorates him to moves closer to his first ever girlfriend, Chloe. He sees Chloe since beginning, but he is attracted first towards the mother. He gets a golden opportunity when he is invited to join the family for picnic to the beach near the Cedar. He says "The picnic. We went that afternoon in Mr. Grace's racy motor car far down the Burrow, all the way to where the paved road ended." (109) Max being introduced with the Graces becomes mutual to the twins. He spends most of his time with them. Max's mother usually rebukes him for his intimacy with the Graces, and says that he will be betraying her like his father. Max spends times mostly with the Graces in their house instead of his own. He is the only person who comes from the other family and gets mixed with the elite family. Moreover, he enjoys with the twins as well as with Mrs. Grace. The family takes a lot of food for picnic and other necessary things such as folding chair, tablecloth, and newspapers which Mr. Grace Usually reads. He observes Mrs. Grace who lights a big cigarette putting it between her lips. Mr. Grace has brought wine bottles which he shares with his wife. Both are renowned drunker. He notices Rose who was not with him in the car. She has come by driving her bicycle that she keeps away in the bush. The twins always behave as though they are restless souls. They kept fighting throughout the way in the car.

Nevertheless, Myles's father and mother scold him for misbehaving with his sister, but he remains indifferent. He starts playing entering the bush to hide himself and appears suddenly to frighten his sister and Rose. On the other hand, he sees Chloe who always prefer to live alone and is found in gloomy. Initially, Max does not like Chloe because she has not an incentive figure like her mother. However, Max is one among them, he observes them sitting on the corner of the tablecloth.

Max succumbs himself to the overwhelming nostalgias which occasionally fills his mind and cause to chuckle and displeasure. Considering deeply about its importance, he forgets the illusions of the real world. He always takes himself back to explore again which might have been cause of happiness. He anticipates for a better world out of all maladies which always troubled him. Regardless to be submerged in the distressful memories of missing, he seeks to get out of it. Therefore, he roams in the nostalgias of others who gave him merry moments. Although the memories of others bring him happiness. He is not able to remove completely the day of misfortunes that he confronts twice in his life. He opines that memory give a new experience to life. However, the great day of childhood brings dimensions in life which can be experienced later. He says "Happiness was different in childhood. It was so much then a matter simply of accumulation, of taking things- new experiences, new emotions- and applying them like so many polished tiles." (144) Banville utters that childhood is a fantastic stage of life where we have happiness of different level in comparison with the happiness of manhood. The experiences of childhood are extraordinary in terms of social and familial responsibilities. As Max has attained maximum age of his life span, he makes analogy of the experiences of two different stages of life. According to him, manhood is a stage of life with maximum responsibilities including the happiness. As he has said that the puzzles of life get resolved in manhood, but the childhood is the stage of maximum happiness and full of pictures of the future. He determines to adhere with memory of early times. Unlike other boy or person, his childhood is occupied with a lot of ups and downs. He confronts desertion of his father and death of his girlfriend. He encounters the sudden death of his girlfriend by drowning who was close to his heart. Subsequently, Max is compelled to memorize his beloved who was the member of the Graces family. Memory of his relationship with Chloe was enormously fruitful. He spends a lot of time by sitting on the sand dunes near the beach and bathing with her in

the sea. He misses not a single chance to disorient Myles who never leaves his sister alone. Both hide themselves from the sight of Myles to spend more time. Max finds Chloe waiting for him when they go to the sea for bathing. Max terminates his attention from Mrs. Grace and starts dating Chloe taking her to the beach. He determines not tell Chloe that she is his second girlfriend after her mother. She was not so beautiful as her mother. Rather, she appeared like boy with a flat body. He portrays her like a girl whose teeth were green and her breath had apple smell. He says he did not care about her physical appearance. Both share romantic moment of their life. Moreover, he kisses her first time when he takes her to the theatre. Max continues to spend time with Chloe. Another romantic moment spending with each other, he recalls that he along with her travels to the waterline at the beach when Chloe pulls him and kisses him in front of people who have come here for bathing. Myles always sees them chuckling and chatting.

Journey of Max to a place which he wishes to be destination of his life in the exploration of past days, is the lodge where he used to live partially with his parents and with the Graces. He discovers that he can tranquilize his discontent emotions when he would reach the house. He says “When Miss Vavasour left me in what from now was to be *my room* I threw my coat over a chair and sat down on the side of the bed breathed deep the stale un-lived-in air, and felt that I had been travelling for a long time, for years, and had at last arrived at the destination” (157) The house contains a lot of memories of Max’s life which he does not want to get rid of. He hires the same room of the house which the Graces ever hired for summer holidays. He inspects the condition of the room which is slightly changed from its earlier condition. Although the room reflects a bunch of memories regarding his family and other tenants specifically the Graces. He knows that the inner turmoil can be subdued by visiting the same house. Max has undergone various situation in his life connected to many façades of people. Incidents or coincident has rendered him to handle circumstances and sustain even in adverse condition. But his psychic does not allow his to cope up with that situation. He seeks to give mental content which might become by returning to the place of origin of the childhood. He lives amongst many people of different kinds but they are not able to give him mental calmness. He cannot comfort himself living in his own house. He says “Perhaps I am learning to live amongst the living again. Practising, I mean. But no, that

is not it. Being here is just a way of not being anywhere.” (192) Since he has retreated to his childhood home, he finds himself no longer distracted or restless. He has achieved a place of solace and end of frustrating life-journey by getting accommodation here.

Max keeps remembering about his beloved and his wife interchangeably. On the one hand, he dissolves in the memory of his beloved Chloe who was dear to him before he left the summer house for city, and on the other hand, he recalls the ill face of his wife who was on the brink of death. His wife was a playful woman who never annoyed him throughout his life. He had a fixed viewpoint for her whole life. He recalls Chloe with whom he lived momentous life in the very beginning. Max shares that he spent most of the time of his childhood with Chloe in walking along the beach and watching movies in the theatre. He missed her a lot when he had separated from her. When he comes to know about her sudden death by drowning in the river, he gets into depression for a period of time. He feels the same when he comes to know about his wife’s fatal disease which has brought her on the brink of death. He similarly gets into depression. Memories of two special personalities bound him to leave the annoying place and he wishes to explore once again the places which have had a collection of memories of his life. Max also seeks to establish his identity through the exploration of self being engaged with different kinds of persons. He begins from the childhood through adulthood to the old age. He discovers himself in his childhood as an inexperienced boy having puzzles of life in the beginning, which could not be resolved in childhood. He then lives a vast young age when the puzzles of his life get resolved. He has a plenty of memories of his young age which strike intermittently at old age. He improves his individuality amongst the ample profound personalities. However, he was a famous and professional architect who served whole life. Old age is an age of experience for Max. He first finds all the puzzled resolved along with the plenty experiences of whole life. He recollects memories of childhood and adulthood as well as searches for his identity which is requisite for a man. Banville gives Max capacity to inspect his life and the memories of half of the life, would help him to live rest of the life, and substantiate his social importance.

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